

## HHS INTERIM COMMITTEE SUNSET REVIEW of Juvenile Justice, *Utah Code Section 53G-8-211(5)*

Submitted by Brett Peterson

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### **Is the statute necessary? Should it be allowed to sunset?**

Yes, **we believe this statute is necessary**. We do not feel this is the right time to allow the statute to sunset. From our perspective, this adjustment which allows for multiple off ramps and connections to services and diversion appears to be working.

Reform is a journey, when I began in this role there were serious concerns from our school partners on the concept of reform. We recognize the challenge that our educators face and we understand how difficult transformation can be. But when I speak about partnership, it is a genuine reflection of what has evolved between the partners in juvenile justice- including JJS, Juvenile Court, and the Schools.

We still recognize and acknowledge that sending a youth to court for a school based offense does not result in a better outcome. However, allowing a mechanism that provides this “backstop” while requiring diversions and JJS early intervention services before referral is made has had significant results.

Transformation is a journey, and it will take the committed effort from all of our partners, and this is something the Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee, and the USBE believe should be extended and not allowed to sunset.

### **Is the program accomplishing its objective? Should it be extended?**

Yes; **we would recommend an extension of 5 years**

### **Are there ways to improve the statute?**

We believe the improvement to maintain all of the “off ramps” currently included should remain. Improvements could be seen if code were to enhance the data collecting requirements for any school based referrals across the board (for USBE, School Districts, Juvenile Court and JJS.)